

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 166469  
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 INT-05 OES-07 CG-00 DOTE-00  
FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-05 COME-00  
DODE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07 IO-13 NSF-01 NSC-05  
NSAE-00 PM-04 USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 FMC-01 DLOS-09  
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R 160207Z JUL 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
INFO AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166469

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV, CA

SUBJECT: FACT SHEET ON ALASKA TANKER TRAFFIC -- PUGET SOUND

1. WITH MOVEMENT OF TRANS-ALASKA  
PIPELINE SYSTEM OIL ABOUT TO BEGIN INTO PUGET SOUND AREA,  
WE SEE NEED FOR FACT SHEET TO MEET GROWING AND POTENTIALLY  
UNINFORMED PUBLIC CONCERN IN BOTH COUNTRIES ABOUT LIKELIHOOD  
OF TANKER SPILLS. AT MAY MEETING WITH GOC ON VESSEL TRAFFIC  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, POSSIBILITY OF AGREED APPROACH TO PUBLIC  
INFORMATION WAS DISCUSSED. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT TEXT OF  
PROPOSED FACT SHEET THAT COULD BE USED BY BOTH COUNTRIES FOR  
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PRESS RELEASE OR AS BACKGROUND. IF EMBASSY CONCURS, IT  
SHOULD BE PASSED ERIK WANG IN EXTAFF TO REVIEW IN HOPE  
TWO SIDES CAN REACH AGREEMENT ON ELEMENTS AT OR BEFORE BI-  
LATERAL MEETING ON VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM NOW  
SCHEDULED JULY 19-20.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE US AND CANADA HAVE BEEN WORKING CLOSELY

TOGETHER ON MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT TANKER TRAFFIC BRINGING ALASKAN OIL TO THE PUGET SOUND AREA OPERATES WITH MINIMUM RISK TO THE ENVIRONMENT. A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE VESSEL NAVIGATION AND EFFECTIVE HANDLING OF POTENTIAL POLLUTION PROBLEMS.

3. WHEN ALASKAN OIL STARTS TO MOVE SOUTHWARD, ONLY 2.8 TAPS TANKERS ON THE AVERAGE ARE EXPECTED TO TRANSIT THE PUGET SOUND AREA PER WEEK. THIS TAPS TRAFFIC WILL INCREASE ONLY SLIGHTLY THE AVERAGE OF 4.4 TANKER TRANSITS PER DAY IN THE AREA DURING THE SIX MONTHS ENDING LAST APRIL. THIS LEVEL IS NOT EXPECTED TO INCREASE FOR SOME TIME, UNLESS AND UNTIL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MOVE CRUDE OIL THROUGH THIS INLAND AREA RATHER THAN VIA OTHER ROUTES, AND THE REQUIRED FACILITIES ARE COMPLETED. NO SUCH MOVES ARE ANTICIPATED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

4. ALL TAPS TANKERS WILL BE US FLAG VESSELS WITH EXPERIENCED US CREWS. THEY ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE MODERN EQUIPMENT WITH EFFECTIVE BACK-UP SYSTEMS SUCH AS RUDDER-ANGLE INDICATOR, GYRO COMPASS, FATHOMETER, LORAN-C NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT AND A COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEM. THESE REQUIREMENTS ENSURE THAT TAPS VESSELS WILL HAVE FULLY EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, NAVIGATION AND COLLISION AVOIDANCE CAPABILITIES IN OPERATION AT ALL TIMES DURING TRANSIT OF THESE WATERS.

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5. A JOINT CANADA-US MARINE POLLUTION CONTINGENCY PLAN SIGNED IN 1974 PROVIDES FOR CLOSE, COOPERATIVE ACTION TO COMBAT POSSIBLE SPILLS. THE TWO COUNTRIES IN 1975 ESTABLISHED A TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME UNDER WHICH ONE-WAY TRAFFIC LANES SEPARATE INBOUND AND OUTBOUND VESSELS IN THE AREA. SINCE THEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE CONTINUED WORKING TOGETHER ON ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO INCREASE THE SAFETY OF TANKER TRAFFIC IN THE AREA. VESSELS MOVING TO AND FROM ALASKA WILL ENTER AND EXIT THE AREA VIA THE TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME AND BE SUBJECT TO CLOSE MONITORING BY US AND CANADIAN AUTHORITIES AT ALL TIMES WHILE IN THE SYSTEM. OUTSIDE THE STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA TAPS VESSELS FOLLOW A COURSE SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES OFF SHORE, AND DO NOT POSE A SIGNIFICANT POLLUTION HAZARD.

6. THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE AUTHORIZATION ACT ALSO PROVIDES FOR A FUND OF \$100 MILLION TO PAY CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES FROM POSSIBLE DISCHARGES OF OIL BY THE US TANKERS ON A LIABILITY BASIS WITHOUT REGARD FOR FAULT. THE ACT EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZES SUCH PAYMENTS TO CANADIANS.

END TEXT. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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